

May 21 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1999

Radio Remarks on Agriculture Provisions in the 1999 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act May 21, 1999

We are living through the longest peacetime expansion in our Nation's history, the strongest economy in a generation, the lowest unemployment in nearly 30 years, over 18 million new jobs since 1993.

Our farmers and ranchers helped to create this new prosperity, giving us good, inexpensive food at home and exporting a lot abroad. Unfortunately, today, too many of them are not reaping the benefits of the prosperity they helped to create. In fact, many of our farmers and ranchers are in the grip of the worst crisis in over a decade. We have to do more to help them.

Three months ago, I called on Congress to give farmers the loan assistance they needed to start the spring planting. Congress didn't act then, and every day they waited brought more farms closer to foreclosure.

So in March our administration took extraordinary action to make \$300 million in loans available to America's farming families now, instead of at the end of the year when they normally would have come up. Congress, Friday, acted to provide funds for those loans and more. On Friday I signed an emergency appropriations bill that will restore the \$300 million to the

loan program to help our farmers, ranchers, and rural communities.

But with thousands of them still in danger of failing, we must continue our efforts. My balanced budget for next year includes additional help for agriculture. Unfortunately, next week the House of Representatives will vote on a bill that would gut some of those commitments, and the Senate is considering even deeper cuts. Our farmers and ranchers feed us. They've helped us to get this prosperity we're enjoying. Now they're in need, and we should help them.

After passing a bill that will do so much good, it would be a real shame and a bad mistake for Congress to reverse course and cut back on our commitment to America's farming and ranching families. I'm committed to working with Congress to give them the support they need.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 1:30 p.m. on May 21 in the Oval Office at the White House for later broadcast. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Radio Actuality Line.

Message to the Congress Transmitting Proposed Legislation To Reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act May 21, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit for your immediate consideration the "Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999," my Administration's proposal for reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and other elementary and secondary education programs.

My proposal builds on the positive trends achieved under current law. The "Improving America's Schools Act of 1994," which reauthorized the ESEA 5 years ago, and the "Goals 2000: Educate America Act" gave States and

school districts a framework for integrating Federal resources in support of State and local reforms based on high academic standards. In response, 48 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have adopted State-level standards. Recent results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) show improved performance for the economically disadvantaged and other at-risk students who are the primary focus of ESEA programs. NAEP reading scores for 9-year olds in high-poverty schools have improved significantly since 1992, while mathematics achievement has also increased nationally.